

Why I Am Participating in the Pickens Plan:

In 1971, I paid 27¢ US per gallon of gasoline in Tampa, Florida. It was late at night, but I remember the sign lit up in the night sky; I had been married just a few days earlier—September 11th. The dollar was devalued that year, opening doors to what were initially the Japanese business interests into the US economy. Oil had not been nationalized by OPEC countries, and we were paying US\$2.13 (nominal dollars) per barrel of light sweet Berri crude.

By 1973, the gas lines stretched around the block, our collective nerves having been stretched thin as well. The \$US was released from the gold standard, as the Federal Reserve Board began ‘managing’ the value of the dollar; the world changed. For a while.

By 1979, a different Middle Eastern picture emerged that has continued to grow more serious to the US. I told anyone who would listen that the people over there would kill themselves for a cause they believed in so as to harm us if at all possible. Folks didn’t take anyone seriously who held such beliefs, ordinarily holding such people in the same regard as T.E. Lawrence. I discontinued speaking of my interests.

I have studied the Middle Eastern culture as a native-born US citizen since 1964, from a cultural perspective, not political, not geological. Specifically, the men at the New York World’s Fair’s Jordan pavilion were good to my mother, my sister and me, permitting us to rest there whenever we wanted; this was important to a woman, my mother, who had a badly injured ankle and was traveling alone with two young daughters. The spires of that white, tent-shaped building are held in my memory with great fondness; they stood in stark contrast against the blue skies I remembered, and were easy to see from a distance.

Now we come again to times not one of us considered possible in our lifetimes. Another September 11th brought home with eerie prescience the memories of other spires; these towers now turned blood red and ashen gray.

Our lives, cheek by jowl, have lurched deeper into the vice of a fossil fueled economy. Hard statistics bring focus to our present situation. Gold and oil prices reek of our national predicament:

Year	Annual Average Gold Price \$US	Annual Average Crude Oil Price	
		U.S. Dollars / Barrel (Nominal Dollars)	U.S. Dollars / Barrel (Constant 2007 Dollars)
1970	35.84	1.80	9.54
1971	40.80	2.13	10.83
1973	97.32	3.14	14.48
1974	159.26	12.44	51.88
1979	306.68	21.54	60.66
1980	612.56	33.97	84.78
1990	383.51	24.47	38.39
1999	278.98	19.26	23.73
2000	279.11	30.30	36.17
2001	271.04	25.95	30.14
2002	309.73	26.11	29.83
2003	363.38	31.12	34.79
2007	696.39	68.13	67.70
2008	912.09 (as of 7/11/2008)		128.06
Current price	964 (7/11/2008) Current gold price Spot price	145.66 Current crude oil price	

(Sources: Kitco, <http://www.kitco.com/>; I NO, <http://www.ino.com/>; MON EX, <http://www.monex.com/>; Earth Policy Institute, http://www.earth-policy.org/Updates/2007/Update67_data2.htm#table4; EIA, http://tonto.eia.doe.gov/oog/info/twip/twip_crude.html)

Observers have commented on our situation for some time. "(T)oday's dollar is [less than] a nickel's worth of the 1971 dollar." (Source: Jett, Wayne. "The Fed and the Nickel Dollar." *Asia Times*. 21 Jun 2006. <http://www.atimes.com/atimes/GlobalEconomy/HF21Dj02.html> 12 Jul 2008.)

I leapt to my feet when learning of the Pickens plan; a single voice has struck a collective nerve. T. Boone Pickens sounding board is our 21st century clarion call to energy independence. There are no bells, no whistles, no escape from a tower's physical walls. Our well-oiled economy grinds metal on metal, undergirded with technologies created as a result of the 19th century Industrial Revolution--shorn up by increasingly ineffective fixes and retrofits.

Just as the 2008 rains broke earthen levees in the Midwest, so, too, has the Pickens Plan presented itself as a blast of fresh air worthy of Gabriel's trump. We join our voices and trumpets in response, else sink further into an existence floating on the largesse of countries who do not wish the US well. Simply put, the US cannot stand as the Sick Man of the Americas. We must raise ourselves up with a common purpose and will to conquer energy production and use, lest we and our children be made prisoners and pensioners to others' ownership, dictates and caprice.

Because the US itself is in arrears on alternative energy use, so now we know what must be accomplished. We must have done with Model-T thinking and coasting on economic and intellectual fumes.

Ohio has far to go in comparison to what other states have done, which makes Ohioans the new wildcatters in this effort; all economic interests are available, social options contracts with potential future value for Ohioans in particular and the US as a whole.

This is participatory; no armchair citizen has place or standing in this American action. Our speculation is to bet on our ability to solve this puzzle, and, in the doing, reap solvency for many. Therefore, I look to lead with a lamp lit not in neon against the night sky, but rather in luminescence against the darkness of our caution and casual interest.

I ask for your assistance. Join me.